

THE  
COUNTRY SPECTATOR.

NUMBER VIII.

TUESDAY, 27 November, 1792.

————— *Nostri farrago libelli.* Juv.  
The hodge-podge of my Book.

I SHALL this day endeavour to amuse my good friends by offering to their perusal three epistles : and as they bear the signatures of very different personages, the Public, it is presumed, will, at least, find variety in my bill of fare.

Mr. COUNTRY SPECTATOR.  
Worthy Sir,

Having by the practice of a respectable profession in the metropolis honourably acquired a competency, I purchased a comfortable house in a pleasant village about one hundred and forty miles North

of *London*, to which I retired for the purpose of spending the remainder of my life with ease and with respect. On my first settling in the Country, I found that all my neighbours treated me with the greatest civility and attention. As it is, you know, Sir, usual for gentlemen in the Country to be appointed Trustees of Turnpikes, Commissioners of Sewers, and to other offices of that kind, I was, after a short residence here, elected to several of these places. After my first appointment I was at every meeting voted into the *Chair*. At one of these assemblies expecting that the Presidentship would be given to me, for I had always been honoured with that distinguished situation, seemingly, as a matter of course, I was surprised to find that every one present, instead of offering me the exalted seat, solicited Mr. *Vulture*, who had been an Undertaker in *Fleet-Market*, and who as well as myself had retired from practice, to accept the oracular office.

Mr. *Vulture* lives in the same village, that I do, and came to reside in it about half a year before me. My appearance being more splendid than that of my neighbour, and I having been of a learned profession and he a dealer in funeral-wares, I was supposed to be the richer man; on which account, I received the greater homage; but it being afterwards discovered, that Mr. *Vulture* possessed nine hundred pounds a year, while I had only eight hundred and fifty, I was degraded and he was elevated in the way,

I have described. The house, which I inhabit, is somewhat better than that of Mr. *Vulture*, and on my first coming to live in it, was called *The Hall*; but now that my neighbour has been found to be richer than I am, his house has taken from mine its name, as he has taken from me my precedence.

Permit me, Sir, to ask you whether you think that I, who rank high in the College of Physicians, am justly superseded by my more opulent rival the *quondam* Undertaker; and whether you have not observed, that wealth has, more especially in the Country, too much the ascendant over the minds of the people? In *London*, titles and professions, and even learning and virtue, tho' too much neglected, confer some degree of pre-eminence: but in the Country riches are made the only standard of merit. I have not during a residence of three years at this place heard any absent stranger spoken of in conversation, but it has been asked "what fortune has he"? and praise or censure has been plentifully bestowed according to the extent or smallness of his property. Now, Mr. *Spectator*, be so good as to convince several of your Country friends, who do not know it, that not every one, who is *rich*, is either *wise* or *good*.

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I am, Sir,

21. Nov. 1792.

Your Admirer and Well-wisher,

*Æsculapius Rusticans.*

*A. Smith*



## To the SPECULATOR of the COUNTRY.

Good Gentleman,

The other day I heard the Vicar's wife of our Town say, that you were the *Speculator* of the *Country*, and that you took notice of all the naughty actions committed in your neighbourhood. You must know, then, that I live a few miles from *Gainsborough*, and that my husband goes every week to your market, as he says, to sell corn. Now I am certain, that this is only an excuse, as I know that none of his corn is yet threshed. It is not that I grudge my husband any innocent pleasure, for I am never so happy as when he seems to enjoy himself: but I assure you, I grow fearful for his safety. His only fault is, that when he gets into company, he is apt to drink a cup too much. He seldom comes home before nine or ten o'clock on the darkest nights, so that every Tuesday Evening I am quite unhappy, till I see him. I sit listening to every horse's foot, that passes by the end of our lane; but how many horses do I often hear, before my husband comes into the yard!

But, Sir, were I sure that he would get home safe at last, I should not be so uneasy. In one of the coldest nights of last winter, when there was a deep snow on the ground, I sat up for him till twelve o'clock, and was sadly distressed indeed: I waited two hours longer; but no husband came! I now

began to grow distracted, for fear some harm had happened to him. I could not bear to sit by myself any longer ; so I went and knocked at *Martin* ——'s door and enquired of his wife, whether *Martin* was come home ; and if he was, whether he knew any thing of my husband ? She said, *Martin* was home by dusk, and had told her that he had left *Peter* at the SHIP, for *he could not get him away*. Now, you may be sure, I did not know what to do with myself ; so I called up *Will* and sent him off with a lantern towards *Gainsborough*. He had not been gone above half an hour, before he came back with his master, who, to tell you the truth, was very fuddled. *Will* had found him lying on the common almost buried in snow, about fifty yards from the road, with his horse standing by him : it was a mercy he did not lose his life. Another time, coming home with *Martin*, he fell off his horse, and bruised his shoulder dreadfully : and once, before we were married, I have heard he was found half-smothered in a ditch. Now, Sir, as the vicar's wife had spoken well of your Papers, *Peter* has promised to bring them from market every week ; and I am certain, that if you were to print a discourse on "The Danger of getting tipsey," he would mind it more, than he does all the Vicar can preach, or I can say, to him ; and it might be of great service, not only to him, but to some other farmers in our neighbourhood.

17 Nov. 1792,  
\*\*\*\*\* near Gainsborough.

From y.<sup>r</sup> to command,

A Farmer's Wife.

*Admiral of the Fleet*

## To Mr. COUNTRY SPECTATOR.

Sir,

Tho' it is but a *bad Lounge* to sit down to write you a letter, yet I believe it is the best way of employing an odd half hour in this horrid, dull, stupid, Country Town. Here have I been ever since Friday fe'nnight, only ten days, and I never thought a month so long in the whole course of my life. Here is nothing at all for a young fellow of spirit to do. He may, indeed, hunt with the Lord of the Manor; but such sort of amusement is quite out of my way; it is harder work than I have been used to, and I am not at all fond of *horse-play*. In Town I pass the day in a constant succession of delights; after breakfast I lounge at *Stockdale's* or *Debrett's*, and skim over half a dozen Pamphlets for and against the Ministry, or take a peep at the last new Comedy. When I am not in the humour to read even *lounging-books*, which often happens, I go to an auction and look at the Company; now and then I take a turn to *Macklin's* or some of the Picture-galleries: and sometimes I spend the whole morning in walking up and down *Bond-Street*. At three I stroll to the Pastry Cook's, and make a party with some of my acquaintance to dine at the *Bedford*, and afterwards to go to the Lobby at *Covent-Garden*; and so time slips away. But in the Country, Sir, what is a man to



do? I never found out till I came hither, that I had no particular business, or that I had more cash than I wanted; but here I can get rid neither of my time nor my money. To be sure, I have seen several young fellows in this town that, at first sight, I thought I should like well enough for companions, and that we should have been congenial souls; but on nearer acquaintance I find, that tho' they are as idle as myself, they are idle in a far worse way. *Tim Trifle* makes morning visits with his sisters and talks small-talk with all the old ladies in the place:—*Dick Vacant* lounges at the Post-Office every day for two hours after the Post comes in:—*Ned Gape* lolls his head out of the window for a whole fore-noon together, till he is as stupid as the stones, on which his eyes are fixed:—and *Jack Prattle* talks scandal about Mrs. or Miss Such-a-one, people that were never heard of within a hundred miles of St. James's.

Pray, Mr. *Country Spectator*, how do you contrive to get rid of time? I suppose you are one of those dull fellows, that read. That is what I never could do in my life for more than a quarter of an hour together; for after the first eight pages, all books grow flat: but if you can think of any better method of passing a morning, I wish you would mention it in your next Paper. I have told my Uncle that I would stay with him a whole month longer, and I dare not break my promise, lest he should break his,

respecting the disposal of his estates ; but how I shall be able to amuse myself, or even to exist, for four long weeks, I cannot conceive. I beseech you, Sir, to favor me with your advice ; for tho' I hate your plodding blockheads, whom Nature never designed for gentlemen, yet I think it shameful to *waste the precious hours*, as some people do in this Town.

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I am, Sir, Your's, &c.

19 Nov. 1792.

*Ennui A-la-mode.*

S.

#### To Correspondents.

LEONARD LOVECHURCH may expect to see his excellent Essay as soon as it can possibly be inserted. He is not unknown to the C. S. who will be proud, at the conclusion of his labours, to acknowledge himself indebted to so able a co-adjutor. *Sed, Domine, vix fatis disputasti.*

X. Y., whoever thou art, the C. S. will, in spite of *Alphabetical order*, place thee *high* in the brief list of his friends.

ANTI-DEMOCRATICUS, who so ingeniously discovers, that No. V. of a certain publication is *treasonable* and *seditious*, is advised to read that No. again ; if he still cannot comprehend,—to read it again ; and if he still is no wiser—never to read *any thing* again.

N. B. He may find the meaning of the word *Irony* in JOHNSON'S DICTIONARY, and in KAIMS'S ELEMENTS OF CRITICISM, Vol. 1. P. 374.